



NEWS RELEASE

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News conference: Announce Veterans' Grand Marshal's for VA Parade **World War II and Injured Iraqi War veterans available for interviews**

PHOENIX (October 24 2005) – The Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center will introduce its Veterans' Grand Marshals for the ninth annual VA Veterans Day Parade at a lunchtime news conference to preview the Nov. 11 parade. All 11 grand marshals will be available for interviews and photo opportunities.

The luncheon is Nov. 7 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the home of Vietnam War veteran Gene Cox, 5802 N. 30th Street in Phoenix.

The 2005 VA Veterans Day Parade is highlighting three different categories of Veterans' Grand Marshal's this year: Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, World War II veterans and Returning Freedom veterans.

The Congressional Medal of Honor is the highest honor the U.S. awards to armed forces personnel. The medal recognizes acts of heroism by those who put themselves in harm's way to save their fellow service members. World War II veterans are being honored this year in conjunction with the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. The Returning Freedom veterans are representing service members who are currently serving in military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Congressional Medal of Honor Recipients, Grand Marshals: The Congressional Medal of Honor is the highest honor to ever be bestowed upon a military member. The medal is awarded for recognized acts of heroism, where the service members put themselves in harm's way to save their fellow service members. The medal is presented to the recipient by the President of the United States: For the 2005 VA Medical Center's Veterans Day Parade the Congressional Medal of Honor Grand Marshals include:

- **Silvestre Herrera, Private First Class (PFC) U.S. Army, World War II Veteran**, honored for saving the lives of his fellow veterans in a battle during World War II. Then PFC Herrera lost both his legs below the knees taking care of his squad when they were stopped by enemy gunfire. His medal for individual gallantry at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor. President Harry S. Truman presented it to him.
- **Fred Ferguson, Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) U.S. Army, Vietnam Veteran**, earned his Congressional Medal of Honor by evacuating wounded soldiers during

the Vietnam War. Despite heavy artillery and mortar fire and warnings for all aircraft to stay clear of the area, CWO Ferguson flew his crippled aircraft and wounded passengers to friendly control. President Richard Nixon presented him with his Congressional Medal of Honor on the South Lawn of the White House.

World War II Veterans Grand Marshals : The 2005 VA Veterans Day Parade is honoring World War II veterans as part of the 60th anniversary commemorations of the end of World War II. WWII Veterans include:

- **Henry Ong, Radio Gunner Operator, U.S. Army Air Corps Tech Sergeant, Ex-Prisoner of War, WWII.** During his service in World War II Mr. Ong communicated information to his home base as a radio operator. He was stationed with the 487th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force in Lavenham, England. During his last mission, with the Berlin Bombing Raids, he was shot down over Germany in a B-17. He was captured by the German forces and remained a prisoner for nine months. He was liberated by the British 8th Army on May 4th. He then returned to the United States and was discharged in September 1945. He currently serves as State Commander of the Arizona Ex-POW organization.
- **Lambert Modder, Chief Pharmacist Mate, U.S. Navy, Pearl Harbor Veteran.** Mr. Modder serves as President of the Pearl Harbor Howard Brannon Veterans Service Organization in Phoenix. He was at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on that fateful day in December 7, 1941 during the Japanese invasion of Hawaii. He served in the U.S. Navy as a pharmacist mate for three and a half years in Hawaii, and served for three additional years in Guam and China.
- **Merlin Kampfer, M.D., Coxswain in the Amphibious Forces, U.S. Navy, World War II.** During WWII Dr. Kampfer served aboard a personnel attack ship USS Riverside APA102 for three years. His tour of duty included Iwo Jima, the Philippines, Okinawa, Japan and Korea. After his discharge, he then joined the Navy Reserves. In 1978 he switched service branches joining the U.S. Air Force as a Lieutenant Colonel after becoming a doctor. Here he served as a Flight Surgeon, Hospital Commander at Peterson Field, Colorado; England Air Force Base, Louisiana; and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina. He retired from the Air Force in 1982. (79 years old) (*Merlin can still fit into his U.S. Navy uniform.*)
- **Myron Kampfer, Corporal, U.S. Marines, World War II.** Mr. Kampfer served in the 4th Marine Division Mortar Squad from 1942 to 1945. He was stationed at Paris Island, South Carolina and Fort Lejeune, North Carolina before being transferred overseas. He was wounded at Saipan and was brought back to the Great Lakes Hospital for recuperation. He is a disabled veteran and is missing a portion of his left arm from below the elbow. He retired from the North American Aviation Company. (80 years old)
- **Helen Coyte, Yeoman Second Class, U.S. Navy, World War II.** Ms. Coyte served in the Navy for June 14, 1943 through February 7, 1946. She was stationed at the Bureau of Ships, Navy Department, Washington, DC. During this

tour Ms. Coyte encountered many experiences related to the war. As a yeoman she was on rotations and was assigned to a flight squadron, the Admiral's staff and others. Later, she was permanently assigned to the Engineer Corps of the Navy and was granted a secret clearance where she would garner necessary information to be shared on classified projects. Ms. Coyte is currently a member of the Cactus Women's All Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) 114 group in Mesa where she volunteers on support projects for the VA Hospital and the community. *(Helen can still fit into her U.S. Navy uniform and wears it to many activities and events where she is representing veterans.)*

Returning Freedom Grand Marshals: These grand marshals are representing service members who are currently serving in military operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The military operations in Afghanistan are working under the Operation Enduring Freedom campaign while those serving in Iraq are working under the Operation Iraqi Freedom campaign.

- **Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans Chris Shipley and Jared Foster.** Shipley was injured in battle with a shot to the head. Foster was injured by friendly fire with a 50 caliber gun.
- **Operation Enduring Freedom veteran Dawn Lake, Lt. Colonel, U.S. Army Reserves.** In the US Army since 1976, and in Afghanistan from 2003-2004, LTC Lake was stationed at Bagram Air Base north of the capital city of Kabul. During her 11-month tour, Lake served as a special intelligence advisor to the Commanding General of the Joint Task force responsible for hunting Al Qaeda and rebuilding Afghanistan. She also served as special liaison officer for the 22 coalition countries serving in Afghanistan.

The VA Medical Center's Veterans Day Parade began in 1997 with 50 entries and approximately 10,000 spectators on the streets. Today there are more than 100 entries and more than 200,000 spectators who line the parade route to watch the Parade. The Parade is designed to help commemorate and honor our veterans and to educate Americans about the wonderful service our veterans have given to protect our freedoms.

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